



**1028th meeting of the
Pacific Coast Numismatic Society**

8:00PM Wednesday, November 28, 2001

Knights of Columbus Hall, 2800 Taraval St. at 38th Ave. San Francisco

GRAND ARMY OF THE REPUBLIC

**Attendance and Souvenir Badges from the 1886 and 1903
National Encampments in San Francisco**

Jerry Schimmel

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Our speaker this month is *Jerry Schimmel* who will tell us about the Grand Army of the Republic and the wide variety of exonomia from the 1886 and 1903 encampments in San Francisco.

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Cable Car Exonomia- Jack Free and Michael Wehner

Jack and Michael gave an illustrated talk on San Francisco's Cable Cars, their history, and the tokens, medals and other exonomia which have been issued over the years.

Andrew S. Hallidie, a Scot who manufactured wire ropes developed the cable car after witnessing a horse-drawn streetcar lose traction on hilly wet cobblestones. As the streetcar tumbled to the bottom of the hill, it dragged the horses to their death. Angered at the horses' death, he set about inventing a substitute for the horse-powered vehicle. After fits and starts, he finally raised enough money to incorporate the Clay Street Hill Railroad Company and began operation in August 1873.

Cable car lines spread throughout San Francisco, but it was not until 1882 that other cities build and operated similar cable car lines. In that year, Chicago opened a line which became the largest cable network in the nation. Many other cities in the United States and the world opened lines during the years 1882 – 1890. After that, electric cars began to replace cable-operated cars, except in San Francisco.

All but three San Francisco lines were replaced by buses after World War II, but the remaining three still operate and were declared a National Historic Landmark in 1964 and a National Civil Engineering Landmark in 1973.

Michael and Jack illustrated their numerous pieces through a computer-assisted slide show. A rare piece is a large medal struck at the Philadelphia mint in 1973 in both bronze and silver. Perhaps 500 of each were produced and the bronze seems to be scarcer than the silver.

Many societies and groups have produced pieces. There is a 1951 streetcar token from the California Street Railroad, a 1973 Hallidie medal, the Pacific Coast Railway and Locomotive Historical Society issued a medal, and the Franklin Mint has issued a number of pieces.

Some of the more interesting pieces are the San Francisco Coin Club 1988 medal in silver, bronze, and oxidized bronze (designed by member *Mike Stanley*), the Dragon coin/medal from the 1988 Sinpex coin show, a one ounce gold piece from the 1989 Sinpex show featuring a Chinese Junk and San Francisco Cable Car, the restoration medal made by the Nevada City mint, the 1988 California State Numismatic Society medal in silver and bronze, the Northern California Numismatic Association 10th Anniversary medal, the Hibler-Kappen 751 "marking devices" medal, and the incredibly engraved scenic San Francisco paperweight medal showing numerous scenes of the city including the bridges, Chinatown, etc.

Many pieces can still be purchased at the Cable Car barn or at various sites along Fisherman's Wharf, Chinatown merchants, elongated cent machines, and of course, at local coin shows.

Exhibits

Sarah Nordin brought a bus token, take a ride to San Quentin (and return!) from 1956. This token was good for a trip over the Richmond San Rafael Bridge to San Quentin prison.

Jerry Schimmel exhibited a number of Cable Car tokens and exonomia including several previously unknown to the speakers.

Jack Free brought two pieces, a Saginaw City, Michigan bus token (?) and a Redwood Empire Coin Club medal, both featuring clasping hands; he then presented both to our resident "handy man", Dr. Paul Holtzman.

Lori Reppeteau brought her 1976 Isle of Man coin celebrating the 100th Anniversary of Douglas and featuring a beautiful horse drawn tram.

Larry Reppeteau exhibited two tiny Indian gold coins called “fanams”, both from Southern India and each probably amounting to a worker’s daily wage. These coins are so tiny that Larry stated merchants counted them by weight using a wooden board with small indentations and sweeping the coins onto the board so one fanam would settle into one depression with the excess swept away and the process repeated until all were counted.

Mark Wm. Clark brought several unlisted Cuban tokens which he is researching to acquire further information..

Michael Wehner exhibited his Dahlia Society of California Medal, featured in the previous Bulletin.

Take a Ride to San Quentin (and Return) by Sarah and Phil Nordin



While cable cars are a favorite form of transportation in the Bay Area, the bus ride to San Quentin Prison must certainly be one the least popular. When the Richmond-San Raphael Bridge opened on 1956, the state prison at San Quentin became readily accessible by motor vehicles. Cecil J. Allen began bus service that same year between Richmond and San Raphael. Of interest to numismatists are the tokens he prepared for fares between San Raphael and the correctional

facility at San Quentin. The tokens are brass, 32mm in diameter. The obverse carries the inscription CECIL J. ALLEN in three lines, surrounded by ★RICHMOND-SAN RAPHAEL★BRIDGE BUS. The reverse says GOOD FOR/ONE FARE around the edges, with the inscription ★TO/SAN/RAPHAEL/OR/RETURN★ in the center.

To be accurate, that's not what the first tokens actually said. The initial batch misspelled the word "RICHMOND" by omitting the "H". These error tokens are almost always encountered in uncirculated condition, lending support to Jerry Zara's note that the typo was immediately discovered and the tokens returned to the manufacturer without being used. The tokens were sold as scrap, and some found their way to collectors. Zara also notes that Mr. Allen died shortly after the corrected tokens were received, and the bus line was discontinued for a while. Subsequent operators did not issue tokens.

The popularity of these tokens is reflected in the fact that at least two different woods have been produced in their likeness. Both pieces carry references to the original inscription ("Richmond" is properly spelled). One design, Atwood #805-A, carries the obverse image of Morgan dollar, while the other design uses the reverse of a Peace dollar.

Raffle

Official Souvenir View Book of the PPIE with photographs of the main buildings and palaces to *Jerry Schimmel*.

A Centennial Edition of the *Medallic Portraits of Washington* along with 2 medallic tokens went to *Jerry Schimmel*.

A Panama Canal Completion Medal from the 1915 Panama Completion Exposition went to *Jerry Schimmel*. Several Cable Car treasures went to respectively: *Elliot Wehner*, an elongated cent (gift of *Jack Free*), *Jerry Schimmel*, a Cable Car money clip, and a pinback went to an unrecorded lucky member.

How in the world did they count them? *Larry Reppeteau*



On making the rounds of a bourse room floor you may have seen in a dealer's case some very small gold and silver coins from India. And when I say small, I do mean small, measuring less than seven tenths of a centimeter in diameter. They are from Southern India and particularly the area know as Travencore, where the silver pieces were called chuckrams and the gold were call fanams.

Now you may wonder "How in the world did they go about counting large amounts of such minute coins?" It was done by the use of what was called a chuckram board. A wooden board on whoch were a designated number of small cavities in its surface. Each hole being the exact size and depth of one fanam or chuckram. It was then only a matter of tossing a handful of coins on to the board and shaking it from side to side until each hole was filled. Any surplus of coins were then swept off the board. In this manner, traders and bankers could count hundreds of these tiny coins on a very short time

San Francisco's Own *Michael Wehner*



As recent events painfully remind us, the “War to end all wars” unfortunately did not fulfill that promise. The 363rd Infantry Regiment of the 91st Infantry Division was largely composed of volunteer San Franciscans during the First World War. Quickly nicknamed “San Francisco’s Own”, the 363rd saw extensive action in the Meuse-Argonne offensive of 1918. When the unit returned home in April 1919, a huge parade was held on Market Street to welcome them. This sterling silver medal may have been a memento of that occasion. On the front are side by side portraits of two soldiers encircled by the words “SAN FRANCISCO TO HER WARRIOR SONS 1919”. The pinback portion has a space for the soldier’s name to be engraved, however the medal is rarely seen this way. The back is blank, except for the maker’s mark, Granat Bros and the fineness 900/1000.

2nd CSNA symposium in Northern California

The CSNA symposium on November 3 at Fort Mason was a resounding success. Our four speakers gave excellent presentations and attendance was significantly higher this year. Thank you to all of the PCNS members who made this event possible.